

Key Outcomes Memorandum

Date: October 21, 2005

To: Members, MLPA Central Coast Regional Stakeholder Group

From: Scott McCreary and Eric Poncelet, CONCUR, Inc.

Re: Key Outcomes Memorandum – October 5-6, 2005 Meeting

cc: MLPA Initiative Staff

Executive Summary – Key Outcomes

On October 5-6, 2005, the MLPA Central Coast Regional Stakeholder Group (CCRSG) participated in a meeting in Monterey, CA. The primary objectives for the meeting were to: 1) receive report back from the MLPA Blue Ribbon Task Force (BRTF) on key guidance; 2) demonstrate the MPA decision support tool (MPA-DST); 3) provide an overview of the process approach for evaluating and proposing MPAs; 4) review the preliminary evaluation of existing MPAs and habitat gap analysis; and 5) begin producing an inventory of candidate MPAs, including initial evaluation and critique.

Key outcomes from the meeting are as follows:

- MLPA Initiative staff distributed copies of the updated regional profile (v.3.0).
- Initiative staff briefed the CCRSG on the results of the September BRTF meeting.
- Master Plan Science Advisory Team (SAT) members conducted three informational presentations.
- Department of Fish and Game staff updated the CCRSG on current work on groundfish hotspots.
- Initiative staff provided an overview and demonstration of the MPA-DST
- Initiative staff presented a draft evaluation and habitat gap analysis of existing central coast MPAs.
- CCRSG members began building an inventory of candidate MPA concepts.
 - CCRSG members initiated discussions on refining existing MPAs.
 - CCRSG members initiated development of new candidate MPA concepts and provided initial commentary, critique, and refinement.
- Initiative staff outlined next steps in developing candidate MPA concepts.

Key next steps are indicated in section IV below. The next CCRSG meeting will take place on November 9-10, 2005 in Cambria, CA.

I. Introduction and Outline

On October 5-6, 2005, the MLPA Central Coast Regional Stakeholder Group (CCRSG) participated in a meeting in Monterey, CA. This Key Outcomes Memorandum summarizes the meeting's main results. The memorandum is organized as follows:

- I. Introduction and Outline
- II. Workshop Objectives, Participants, and Materials
- III. Key Outcomes
 - A. Distribution of updated regional profile
 - B. Report back from MLPA Blue Ribbon Task Force (BRTF) meeting
 - C. Update on "TBD Bin" items
 - D. Overview and demonstration of MPA decision support tool (Module 1)
 - E. Update on groundfish hotspots and the MLPA process
 - F. Update on external MPA proposals
 - G. Science questions and information requests
 - H. Project website and links to scientific information
 - I. Master Plan Science Advisory Team (SAT) presentations
 - J. Evaluation and gap analysis of existing central coast MPAs
 - K. Breakout group (north/south) discussions—Building an inventory of candidate MPA concepts (Modules 2 and 3)
 - L. Public comment
- IV. Next Steps

II. Meeting Objectives, Participants, and Materials

The primary objectives for the meeting were as follows:

1. Receive report back from the BRTF on key guidance
2. Demonstrate MPA decision support tool (MPA-DST)
3. Provide an overview of the process approach for evaluating and proposing MPAs
4. Review the preliminary evaluation and habitat gap analysis of existing MPAs
5. Begin producing an inventory of candidate MPA concepts, including initial evaluation and critique

Forty-seven CCRSG primary and alternate members attended the meeting. Doyle Hanan, Mark Carr, Rick Starr, and Louis Botsford participated as Central Coast Science Sub-Team (SST) members. Steve Barrager, SAT chair, also participated. No one was in attendance from the BRTF.

Meeting materials may be found on the MLPA website at:
<http://www.dfg.ca.gov/mrd/mlpa/meetings.html#centralcoast>.

III. Key Outcomes

A. Distribution of updated regional profile

Initiative staff distributed copies of the updated Regional Profile of the Central Coast Study Region (v.3.0, dated September 19, 2005) to CCRSG members.

B. Report back from BRTF meeting

John Kirlin (MLPA Initiative staff) reported that the BRTF, at its September 28, 2005 meeting, approved the package of Regional Goals, Objectives, and Design and Implementation Considerations sent to it by the CCRSG with two key changes.

1. The BRTF chose to express the text on socio-economic impacts as an objective under Goal 5. The new Goal 5, Objective 1 reads: “Minimize negative socio-economic impacts and optimize positive socio-economic impacts for all users, to the extent possible, and if consistent with the Marine Life Protection Act and its goals and guidelines.”
2. The BRTF deleted the references to “upwelling centers” and “larval retention areas” in Goal 4, Objective 1. The restated objective now reads: “Include within MPAs the following habitat types: estuaries, heads of submarine canyons, and pinnacles.”

C. Update on “TBD Bin” items

Michael Weber (MLPA Initiative staff) presented a staff analysis on the issue of habitat replication. Staff recommended that habitat replication, as defined in the MLPA, be applied on a biogeographic region rather than within a study region, consistent with the requirements of the MLPA and the MLPA Master Plan Framework (MPF). If the packages of MPAs developed in the central coast do not meet the requirements for replicate habitats, this requirement would be shifted to future study regions to the north that are in the same bioregion. However, the CCRSG should consider the requirement for habitat replication as it develops alternative packages of MPAs and seek to meet the requirement where possible.

Several CCRSG members expressed the concern that the BRTF had little time to discuss the TBD bin items at the September BRTF meeting. MLPA Initiative staff responded that while in-meeting deliberation was relatively brief, the BRTF members had read and considered the TBD bin issues.

D. Overview and demonstration of MPA-DST (Module 1)

Mary Gleason (MLPA Initiative staff), along with Brad Pfefferle and Bob Sherwood of IM Systems Group, Inc. (IMSG), provided an overview and demonstration of the decision support tool developed by IMSG. The purpose of the MPA-DST is to provide CCRSG members with the capacity to delineate candidate MPA concepts and evaluate what habitats or other areas of interest are captured within candidate MPAs or arrays of MPAs.

Mary briefly described a meeting handout containing a tutorial for assisting CCRSG members to become more comfortable with the MPA-DST. Mary also emphasized that CCRSG member candidate MPA concepts developed using the tool will remain private until “published”, at which point they can be viewed by other CCRSG members.

MLPA Initiative staff will email CCRSG members the website URL for accessing the tool, along with CCRSG member usernames and passwords, by October 10, 2005.

Initiative staff reminded stakeholders that the reports from the MPA-DST are only as good as the underlying spatial data layers selected, noting that some data layers are more accurate than others. Staff also pointed out that most of the socioeconomic data on fisheries still needs to be added. Staff invited CCRSG members to continue incorporating local knowledge into their deliberations and to not rely solely on the MPA-DST.

CCRSG members made several comments regarding the decision support tool:

- Participants requested that a function be added to show latitude and longitude and allow candidate MPAs to be snapped to latitude and longitude.
- Participants requested that depth contours also be provided in fathoms.

E. Update on groundfish hotspots and the MLPA process

John Ugoretz and Deb Wilson-Vandenberg (California Department of Fish and Game—DFG) provided an update on recent efforts by the DFG and the Pacific Fishery Management Council to identify areas with a high probability of take and the status of overfished species within established rockfish conservation areas. The agencies are exploring the possibility of providing for more fishing in some of these areas (e.g., during additional months of the year, or at different depths). The agencies are also exploring the potential benefits of overlapping key rockfish hotspots with MPAs.

CCRSG members commented that these agencies need to collect data on fishing effort to help contextualize areas of high take. Participants also discussed the relationship between MPAs and optimal yield. DFG staff will be contacting the Pacific Fishery Management Council to discuss how to best coordinate efforts and to determine how and if total allowable catch allocations would change in response to establishing MPAs.

F. Update on external MPA proposals

John Kirlin stated that the deadline for submitting external MPA proposals is October 15, 2005. These proposals must adhere to the guidelines established in the MPF. The CCRSG will be asked to take these external proposals into consideration as part of its deliberations.

G. Science questions and information requests

Mike Weber presented the SAT responses to CCRSG questions on the topics of 1) larval retention areas and 2) nursery habitats. The SAT recommended that larval retention areas not be included in the list of habitats to be replicated. The SAT also recommended that nursery areas, which are often captured by other habitats, be considered on a case-by-case basis.

H. Project website and links to scientific information

Initiative staff reminded CCRSG members of the existence of an MLPA Initiative website that lists references to pertinent scientific literature. The website may be accessed at: <http://www.dfg.ca.gov/mrd/mlpa/science1.html> and is updated periodically. CCRSG members are invited to recommend additional references and should direct such inquiries to John Ugoretz.

I. Master Plan Science Advisory Team (SAT) presentations

Members of the SAT made the following dinnertime presentations to the CCRSG:

1. *Sustainability and age structure in marine populations (Dr. Loo Botsford, University of California, Davis).*
2. *Larval dispersal and recruitment (Dr. Mark Carr, University of California, Santa Cruz).*
3. *Movements of marine species relative to MPAs (Dr. Rick Starr, Marine Advisor for the University of California Sea Grant Extension Program for Santa Cruz and Monterey Counties).*

CCRSG members posed, and the presenters addressed, several clarifying questions. In particular, several participants pointed out that fishing is not the only cause for the shortening of age structures of populations.

Summaries of the SAT member presentations may be found on the MLPA website at: http://www.dfg.ca.gov/mrd/mlpa/meeting_100505.html.

J. Evaluation and gap analysis of existing central coast MPAs

Mary Gleason and John Ugoretz presented MLPA Initiative staff's draft evaluation and gap analysis of existing central coast MPAs. They noted that the draft document will be revised per CCRSG member input. CCRSG comments are requested in writing by October 15, 2005. Comments should be sent to mplacomments@resources.ca.gov.

Among the general findings of the draft evaluation and gap analysis are the following:

- The existing array of MPAs along the central coast does not include representation of all habitat types and provides little in the way of ecosystem protection or coherent management.
- There is currently little protection of deep-water habitats, eelgrass, canyons, or pinnacles in the central coast study region.
- Estuarine habitat is protected in the northern part of the central coast study region but not in the southern part.
- The current data regarding distribution of pinnacles and nearshore rocky reefs is relatively poor.
- There are large gaps between MPAs in the south (Morro Bay to Big Creek) and the north (Elkhorn Slough to beyond Pigeon Pt.).

CCRSG members offered a variety of comments on the draft evaluation and gap analysis document. These included:

- Participants queried staff about the measurability of particular regional objectives.
- Participants suggested that the use of species “presence” is a crude measure and doesn’t really address whether the size of the MPA is sufficient for that species.
- Participants recommended including recent research by Dr. John Stevens (Cal Poly San Luis Obispo) on the performance of MPAs.
- Participants questioned the accuracy of several of the staff analysis findings regarding whether certain objectives are being met by existing MPAs and other regulatory measures.
- Participants suggested disaggregating between specific species and types of MPAs with regard to the “spacing guidelines”; spacing between 2 reserves that don’t both have rockfish, for example, is not relevant.

K. Breakout group discussions—Building an inventory of candidate MPA concepts (Modules 2 and 3)

1. Two-step process

CCRSG members participated in a two-step process to begin building an inventory of possible candidate MPA concepts. Participants acknowledged that the next steps of evaluating the candidate MPA concepts and beginning to think about possible MPA packages would take place following the October CCRSG meeting.

On Day 1, CCRSG members broke out into two groups (one North and one South) to begin discussing potential modifications to existing MPAs. On Day 2, CCRSG members broke out into four groups (two north and two south) to continue the Day 1 discussions and to begin exploring possible new MPAs. Participants were asked to approach this process in the spirit of “inventing without committing.”

When proposing candidate MPA concepts, participants were asked to describe the habitats and species protected as well as the regional goals, objectives, and design considerations achieved. Participants were also asked to provide preliminary feedback and critique on the candidate MPA concepts being proposed.

Participants prepared data forms detailing the specifics and rationales for most of the candidate MPA concepts discussed. During the meeting, MLPA Initiative staff began entering into the MPA-DST the candidate MPA concepts proposed.

On the whole, participants found the MPA-DST to be useful. It did take some time for CCRSG members to get familiar with its functionality. As well, it took some time to delineate the respective boundary polygons.

2. North and south breakout groups

a. Northern breakout groups

On Day 1, participants discussed possible modifications to the following existing MPAs in the northern part of the study area: Ano Nuevo special closure, Elkhorn Slough SMR, Hopkins SMR, Pacific Grove SMCA, Carmel Bay SMCA, and Point Lobos SMR. Participants discussed the options of retaining the existing MPAs, removing them, or modifying them by changing the MPA boundaries, changing the MPA classification, or changing the regulations that apply.

On Day 2, participants proposed new candidate MPA concepts intended to address the gap analysis and better achieve regional goals and objectives. Key themes from Day 2 discussions include the following:

- Several participants had specific candidate MPA concepts they wished to advance.
- Participants discussed approximately 25-30 potential new MPAs for the northern part of the central coast study area.
- Participants proposed multiple possible candidate MPA concepts for certain geographic regions (especially near the Monterey peninsula).
- Some candidate MPA concepts were variants of others. Other candidate concepts were linked to the proposed revisions to existing MPAs.
- In some instances, via the process of providing critical feedback, participants co-created or revised candidate MPA concepts on the spot.
- Participant comments on candidate MPA concepts typically focused on impacts on particular user groups (especially commercial fishing, recreational fishing, and diving).

b. Southern breakout group

On Day 1, much of the discussion among southern breakout group participants focused on the review of existing MPAs and the contents of the data gaps. The MPAs under discussion included: Julie Pfeiffer Burns SMCA, Big Creek SMR, Atascadero Beach SMCA, Morro Beach SMCA, Pismo SMCA, Pismo-Oceano SMCA, and Vandenberg SMR. Participants also

discussed the impacts of other management measures, such as the Diablo Canyon Exclusion Zone, the Vandenberg safety zones, and regulations like the rockfish conservation areas.

The discussion of existing MPAs was productively carried forward into a broader exploration of potential new candidate MPA concepts on Day 2. Among the recurring themes were the following:

- Several CCRSG members had concepts they wished to advance. Some were quite specific; others were more general.
- Participants discussed approximately 40-45 potential new MPAs for the northern part of the central coast study area.
- There may be an inherent tradeoff between nuanced delineation of MPAs and ease of enforcement. While simple rectangles are easier to enforce, they may generate unintended regulation of uses.
- In several instances, proposers of candidate MPA concepts found that they were able to refine concepts in such a way as to integrate the interests of other CCRSG users.
- Potential socioeconomic impacts on salmon trolling, spot prawns and groundfish fishing were noted for several potential MPAs.
- Some, but not all, gaps have been potentially addressed with the concept MPAs.

3. Loading into the MPA-DST

MLPA Initiative staff made efforts to load all of the candidate MPA concepts offered (both modifications to existing MPAs and proposed new MPAs) into the MPA-DST. CCRSG members may access these at <http://www.mpademo.imsq.com>. MLPA Initiative staff will provide CCRSG members with usernames and passwords.

L. Public comment

Ten members of the public provided comments. Some spoke in support of MPAs generally as a tool for protecting marine habitat and species. Others commented on the effectiveness of existing MPAs and recommended specific modifications. Several summarized new candidate MPA concepts that they intend to submit to MLPA Initiative staff and indicated their interest in discussing these with CCRSG members. Still others expressed interest in submitting proposals; some indicated an interest in co-developing candidate MPA concepts with CCRSG members.

IV. Next Steps and Schedule

A. Near-term next steps

Near-term next steps to prepare for the November 9-10, 2005 CCRSG meeting include:

1. Staff to compile full inventory of candidate MPA concepts (including proposed modifications of existing MPAs) along with preliminary critiques and data requests offered at October CCRSG meeting.
2. MLPA Initiative staff to email website URL for accessing the decision support tool, along with CCRSG member usernames and passwords, to CCRSG members by October 10, 2005.
3. CCRSG members to propose additional or refined candidate MPA concepts through October 15, 2005 so these can be added to the preparatory materials for the November CCRSG meeting. [Note: CCRSG members can propose additional MPA concepts after this date as well.]
4. Drawing on the preliminary critique offered by CCRSG members and staff's best professional judgment, staff to conduct preliminary analysis of candidate MPA concepts (including proposed modifications of existing MPAs). This will include:
 - Staff to sort MPA concepts.
 - Staff to consolidate MPA concepts to the extent that they are redundant or overlap significantly.
 - Staff to note general areas of agreement and disagreement.
 - Staff to provide GIS analysis of habitats captured.
5. Staff to revise Evaluation of Existing Central Coast MPAs and gap analysis.
6. CCRSG to participate in work sessions to be organized in the north (1 in Monterey) and south (1 in San Luis Obispo) on October 20, 2005. The purpose of the work sessions is to give CCRSG members: a) more experience working with the MPA-DST, and b) the opportunity to revise/refine their candidate MPA concepts based on October CCRSG meeting discussions.
7. Small, cross-interest groups of CCRSG members wishing to develop or refine candidate MPA concepts, but who may benefit from technical assistance in using the MPA-DST, may request staff support. Requests should be sent to Michael DeLapa.
8. Staff to distribute a summary of its preliminary analysis to CCRSG members as part of the November CCRSG meeting materials package.
9. CCRSG to develop more fully formed and refined candidate MPA concepts for discussion at the November CCRSG meeting

B. Longer-term next steps

1. November CCRSG meeting (November 9-10, 2005 in Cambria)
 - a. CCRSG to propose and discuss refined MPA concepts (including revised modifications to existing MPAs).

- b. CCRSG to compare refined MPA concepts with habitat gap analysis and analyze the extent to which they contribute to regional goals, objectives, design considerations, and MPF criteria.
 - c. CCRSG to enter refined MPA concepts into preliminary alternative packages of MPAs.
 - d. CCRSG to begin deliberating on preliminary alternative packages.
2. November BRTF meeting (November 29-30, 2005)
 - BRTF to review and provide guidance on preliminary alternative packages of MPAs developed at November CCRSG meeting. SAT and MLPA Initiative staff to provide input into this review.
3. December CCRSG meeting (December 7-8, 2005 in Monterey)
 - CCRSG to consider guidance from BRTF and deliberate on final set of alternate packages of MPAs.